

AVAPCD SPEARHEADS CLEAN CITIES REDESIGNATION DRIVE

The AVAPCD is poised to become a driving force behind the Antelope Valley's transition to alternate fuels in the new millennium. To this end, 28 representatives of local agencies and businesses and AVAPCD staff convened for the kick-off meeting of the Antelope Valley Clean Cities Coalition, a public-private network which aims to expand the use of alternative fuels in the Antelope Valley.

Originally conceived in 1995 as the Lancaster Clean Cities Coalition, the re-formed Coalition will be spearheaded by the AVAPCD and include representatives from the cities of Lancaster, Palmdale, Los Angeles County, the California Energy Commission, utility companies and private businesses with vehicle fleets. The purpose of the November 29 meeting was to re-introduce these and other potential stakeholders to the Clean Cities Coalition, and gauge their ongoing interest in alternative fuels and vehicles. Participants also learned about the process and requirements for renewing the region's Clean Cities designation, which expires the last day of 2000.

To insure the renewal deadline is met, the AVAPCD has contracted with Thomason & Associates, Inc. of Las Vegas to develop a five-year program plan that targets the expansion of alternative fuel vehicle growth in the region. A major component of the plan involves bringing local businesses and agencies into the process through a public private partnership, whose members are committed to expanding alternative fuel vehicles (AFV) usage in their operations.

The Antelope Valley Clean Cities Coalition is one of 80 coalitions nationwide, which have voluntarily joined to support the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) Clean Cities Program. The mission of the DOE's Clean Cities Program is to expand the use of alternatives to gasoline and diesel fuel in order to reduce dependence on imported oil, lessen air pollution, stimulate the economy and increase public awareness about the benefits of alternative fuels, such as compressed natural gas (CNG) and electricity. To this end, Clean Cities Coalitions throughout the country actively work to increase the number of AFVs and refueling stations in their respective regions, and to advance legislation and incentives that promote AFVs. Incentives may include grant funding to offset the somewhat higher cost of alternative fuel vehicles, and promotional advantages associated with having a business located in a region that has earned the coveted Clean Cities designation.

According to AVAPCD Governing Board Chairman Frank Roberts, the time is right to renew the region's commitment to clean, alternative fuel technologies. "In light of the recent rise in fuel prices and the dramatic air quality improvements this region has achieved, the Antelope Valley is strategically positioned to lead Southern California's transition to alternative fuels," commented Roberts, adding that the AVAPCD began laying the groundwork for this transition last year, when it awarded \$851,111 in vehicle registration fee grants towards the construction of two CNG stations in the Antelope Valley.

The next meeting of the Antelope Valley Clean Cities Coalition is scheduled for Thursday, January 11, at 1:30 PM, at the AVAPCD's Lancaster headquarters. For more information, call (661) 723-8070.

